C O X

MEMORANDUM

United States Position on Certain French Proposals
Concerning the Middle East Defense Organization

See
dated 2155
to Paris
10/15

The Government of the United States has studied with care the memorandum of the French Government on the United Kingdom proposals for the establishment of a Middle East Defense Organization which was handed to the Department of State August 15, 1952. Although this memorandum was presented to the Department of State for its information, it concluded with the suggestion that certain points should be made the subject of an exchange of views through diplomatic channels among the Governments of the United States, France and the United Kingdom. Subsequently, the French Foreign Office proposed to the United States Embassy in Paris that these points should be considered at a meeting in London of representatives of the three Governments.

The Government of the United States wishes to explain to the French Government the reasons why it does not favor a three-power meeting on the subject of the Middle East Defense Organization and considers that it might be appropriate at the same time to indicate its position on the several important points developed in the memorandum of August 15.

This Government appreciates the considerations which have moved the French Government to propose that points involving the NATO Standing Group and the Near East Arms Coordinating Committee should be discussed initially on a three-power basis. The difficulty of holding such a meeting in secret has, however, been demonstrated by experience. In the opinion of this Government, the reactions of the other sponsoring powers and of the Arab States as well, in the event they learned that such a meeting had occurred, would be extremely adverse. It would probably be felt that the three powers were assuming the right to determine important issues of general concern

in advance

in advance of consultation with other interested states. The Government of the United States considers that it would be unwise to take steps which would thus risk impairing the principles of cooperation and equality of membership on which it is agreed the proposed Organization should be based.

The Government of the United States shares the conviction of the French Government that close liaison must be maintained between the proposed Middle East Defense Organization and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. This Government, however, does not consider that such liaison should be effected by means of an identical Standing Group functioning in both Organizations. It is true that this solution was proposed in the Standing Group study "Command in the Mediterranean and Middle East" (S.G. 80/4), but as the French Government is aware, this paper was presented merely as a preliminary study. Moreover, the necessity for modifying the proposals put forward therein was recognized in the North Atlantic Military Committee, November 20, 1951, (M.C. 38).

As the French Government is aware, some of the member Governments of NATO would be most reluctant to agree at the present time to the formal association of NATO with the Middle East Defense Organization through the device of a common Standing Group. This arrangement, which would tend to emphasize the Western character of the MEDO, would also obviously have undesirable effects on the Arab States, whose participation in the Organization it must be a prime object of policy to effect. Moreover, in the view of this Government, it would be unwise to establish in the MEDO a Steering Group from which Turkey is excluded. It is obvious that Turkey's contribution to Middle East defense will be of the greatest importance and this Government feels

strongly

strongly that no action should be taken which might diminish the willingness of the Turkish Government to make this contribution full and effective.

The coordination of the work and plans of MEDO with those of NATO, concerning the necessity of which the United States Government is in full agreement with the French Government, could, in the view of this Government, be effectively served by establishing for MEDO some form of ad hoc arrangement, outside the formal Organization, whereby the views of the United States, France, the United Kingdom and Turkey might be coordinated on a continuing basis prior to being brought to bear on the operations of the Planning Group. It is the view of this Government that such an ad hoc arrangement could work satisfactorily, at least during the initial phase of the MEDO with which the British memorandum is concerned. In fact, this Government believes that there would be particular merit in such an arrangement, which would make possible the organic growth of the MEDO in response to the demands of developing experience. As the Organization develops and moves closer to the stage where it is ready to assume actual Command responsibilities, modifications in its structure, including the establishment of some formal Steering Group will no doubt be required. It is the view of this Government that it will be possible more clearly to judge the form such an arrangement should assume when that time arrives and that meantime guidance to the MEDO Planning Group should be provided on the informal basis suggested.

With respect to the function of coordinating the requests of the States of the Middle East for arms and equipment, the Government of the United States is in agreement with the position of the French Government that for the time being no change should be made in the present procedures under which this task is performed by a three-power committee sitting in Washington. However, it is clear that this is a field in which the MEDO will have a substantial

interest

interest and the three powers will have to decide later, on the basis of experience, how the operations of the Near East Arms Coordinating Committee can best be coordinated with the defense plans of NEDO. This Government does not consider that the use of the language of Paragraph 4C of the United Kingdom memorandum will embarrass the work of the Near East Arms Coordinating Committee or increase the difficulty of effecting the coordination of this work with the plans of NEDO.

The United States Government fully shares the view of the French Government that the Government of Israel should be informed of any discussions looking toward the establishment of NEDO and of the work of the Organization, once it is established.

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9/17/52